

Emerging Issues
in TEFL
Challenges for Asia

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Learning English and Learning to Teach English: The Case of Two Teachers of English in Pakistan

Ayesha Bashiruddin

INTRODUCTION

This paper aims to describe and understand how Fatima¹ and Khulood,² two experienced secondary school teachers of English in Pakistan, develop their classroom practices in two diverse educational settings: a private English-medium school and a government Urdu-medium school. In particular, it looks at their classroom practices and discusses in detail the various influences on their teaching and its development. It also examines two interrelated forms of learning: (a) learning English, both in a formal classroom setting and in an informal setting (e.g. in society and outside the school); and (b) learning to teach English by attending formal workshops and courses and by making self-initiated efforts on-the-job. The paper not only depicts and discusses Fatima's and Khulood's current teaching practices through four teaching lessons but also takes a broader perspective on the development of their classroom practices over their careers. It presents a story of their teaching development by piecing together rich vignettes which link to their own past experiences of learning English, their earlier personal experiences, their teaching experiences and their own training. This research study places its importance on the teachers' subjective understandings, presenting their experiences as they themselves understand them. Through their stories, the study provides a detailed analysis of the way English is learned and taught

as a second and a foreign language in Pakistan. The central research question guiding my study was: How do teachers of English in Pakistan understand the development of their classroom practices?

This study employed narrative inquiry which places importance on the teachers' subjective understanding. Narrative inquiry keeps teachers' 'personal practical knowledge' as its main focus and explores how individual teachers understand local, everyday events and make decisions in their classroom as part of their narratives.

Narrative inquiry keeps teachers' 'personal practical knowledge' (Connelly and Clandinin 1992) as its main focus and explores how individual teachers understand local, everyday events and make decisions in their classroom as part of their narratives.

This approach emphasizes 'teachers' theorizing rather than theorizing about teachers or teaching' (Carter and Doyle 1996: 122). As such, it gives centrality to the teachers' stories and recognizes the importance of subjective interpretations of life experiences and the important role of the social, historical and political contexts in which knowledge is constructed. In valuing the stories teachers tell, narrative inquiry validates teachers' experiences and the ways they learn from their practice.

To construct stories of experiences I collected data mainly through oral life history interviews (six each) and through classroom observations, post-observation interviews and field notes. Narrative inquiry enabled me to spend time with participants so that I could understand their concerns, struggles and layers of relationships; and present a 'thick description' (Geertz 1973). As a narrative inquirer, I have presented their experiences, as they themselves understand them. I observed various lessons for twenty days of each teacher but in my analysis I have concentrated on only four prominent lessons.

FATIMA'S AND KHULOOD'S STORIES OF LEARNING ENGLISH

Fatima was educated in an English-medium school in which English was taught as a subject and was used as a medium of

instruction. During her college and university days she had many opportunities to read and write in English. She was also exposed to English because all her subjects were in English. She rarely spoke English. She only responded to the teacher in the class. She had informal experiences of learning English through reading. She is an avid reader. She developed this interest in reading for pleasure while she was in school. Fatima still enjoys reading. She also learned English by writing a diary in English, listening to her father conversing in English with his friends and colleagues, and listening to her cousins and friends.

Khulood was educated in an Urdu-medium school in which English was taught only as a subject. However, in her degree college, as in all colleges in Pakistan, all the subjects were in English, which she had to struggle to learn. She started learning conversational English in the PACC³, by reading newspapers and by watching English news on BBC and Pakistan Television. She had no informal opportunities of using English, so on her father's advice she and all of her sisters and brothers started talking and practicing English with each other at home. Gradually, all of them started to insert English words into their Urdu-based conversations; as a consequence, they gradually developed a reasonable proficiency in English.

FATIMA' AND KHULOOD'S STORIES OF LEARNING TO TEACH ENGLISH

Even though Fatima has a degree in teaching, she did not set out to become a teacher. She decided to teach because she got bored staying at home while living in Saudi Arabia. She had also developed some interest after teaching her own children. Though these early teaching experiences with her older daughters were important, the most significant turning point in her professional and personal life was in 1980-81 when she taught her third daughter. She used the prescribed kindergarten books to teach. She formed a school-like routine and taught this daughter rudimentary English, Urdu, and mathematics each morning. She recalled this

period of teaching with considerable pride and a sense of accomplishment.

Fatima's story of learning to teach English shows how her learning to teach started with formal training. In her B.Ed. program, she learned to lecture effectively. Now Fatima uses lecturing most of the time. Fatima's learning to teach is mostly on-the-job. She had no teacher or teaching in mind as a model. She discovered ways of learning to teach through her own experience of teaching, first at a school in Saudi Arabia and later in her current school in Karachi. She introduced various ways of engaging students in activities that encouraged student participation, such as encouraging students to use creative ways of writing a story or allowing them to brainstorm before writing by using a poster. Another interesting way in which she recently learned about teaching was by conducting a workshop for her colleagues. She gained insights into her own teaching when describing teaching techniques for her colleagues.

Fatima currently teaches at a Community Model School (CMS) in Karachi. Fatima develops her teaching practices in a context in which her teaching is shaped, directed, influenced, and circumscribed. These forces include the school discipline, the BISE requirements, finishing the course in time, and preparing the students for final examinations.

Fatima's classroom practices through four classroom lessons highlight their important features. Basically, every lesson that I observed over twenty days gave me insight into Fatima's teaching practices and beliefs. I chose these four lessons particularly because they represent four very distinct practices that Fatima used during my observation: teaching a reading text by either lecturing or lecturing and asking questions (teacher-oriented); and teaching writing a story from either an outline or essay writing based on a poster (student-oriented).

Lessons 1 and 2 represent the most frequently used teaching practices in her teaching repertoire. Fatima teaches most of the reading texts in the prescribed textbook in this way. They reveal her belief that teachers are knowledge givers and students are

receivers of knowledge. The common features of these two lessons are the use of lecturing. Lesson 1 illustrates a typical lesson in which Fatima teaches reading lessons from the prescribed textbook by reading the text aloud, defining the meanings of the unfamiliar words and explaining the text. Lesson 2 demonstrates another way, in which she both lectures and involves students by asking them questions about the text. These two lessons depict teacher-controlled and transmission approaches to teaching. In contrast, Lessons 3 and 4 demonstrate a shift from her usual practice of lecturing. They involve more student-centred approaches to teaching, which were triggered by a workshop she attended on teaching writing skills. These two lessons represent her way of involving students in the writing process. They represent her belief that writing is an important process in which students need to be involved. She does not use these teaching practices very often, because she feels that they take up a lot of time and disrupt class discipline. These methods of teaching rest on her belief that teaching ought to make the learning process interesting and interactive for the students. Therefore, in Lesson 3 she teaches story writing by encouraging students to make their stories interesting by adding details and dialogues or to include themselves as one of the characters. The structure of Lesson 4 arises out of her belief that students should have something interesting to inspire them to write an essay. She uses a poster for the activity and encourages the students to think about it; then she asks them one by one to come and write sentences on the chalkboard.

The analyses of these four lessons bring out the prominent features of Fatima's classroom practices, the type of teacher she is, and various factors that influence her teaching. The various interrelated forces in the past and present highlight the significant changes and development of her classroom practices and show the complexities of her story of development. She constantly struggles to cope with the requirements laid down by BISE and the school and her conflicting beliefs about teaching and learning. Within this culture of following the path prescribed by external agencies, sometimes Fatima engages students in other kinds of activities and

interactions; however, she can only do so in limited ways, in some cases without much chance to fully explore their possibilities. She runs into time restrictions, traditions, and other structural and cultural forces that make her efforts to go beyond lecturing, for example, difficult.

Khulood's learning to teach English story shows how her memories as a student and as an observer of teaching influence the ways she thinks about and approaches her own classroom practices. In her early years of teaching, she followed the same pedagogical strategies and sequencing that some of her teachers in school and college followed. She still uses many strategies similar to those of these former teachers.

Khulood also learned to teach on-the-job while teaching in five different schools in eight years. In every school and in each class, Khulood had to adjust her teaching strategies according to students' needs. Each school context was different. Each school was in a different locality and catered to a different socioeconomic class. In one school, the students' positive feedback influenced Khulood to make changes in her teaching strategies. In some schools, she felt that she could use group work; in another one she could not do so, because the classes were too large and the principal wanted her to teach by lecturing. Now, in her present school in Karachi, she finds pair work more effective than group work.

Khulood currently teaches at the Government Secondary School for Boys⁴ (GSSB), in Karachi. Various factors within the school influence her teaching practices: for example, the physical structure and the seating arrangements in the class which prevent the students from moving around and making groups; the curriculum prescribed by the Ministry of Education; the students' lack of interest in learning English; students' jobs outside the school which leave them little time or energy to study at home; and discipline problems especially that of the students' habit of playing truant.

Khulood's classroom practices through four lessons reveal important features of her teaching. Virtually every lesson that I observed during twenty days helped me understand Khulood's teaching practices and beliefs. I selected these four lessons

particularly because they represent four very distinct practices that Khulood used during my observation: reading routine and dictation routine (teacher-oriented) and pair work and self-initiated reading (student-oriented). These lessons lead to discussions about other related classroom practices.

Lessons 1 and 2 represent the teaching practices Khulood most frequently used. She teaches most of the reading texts in the prescribed textbook in this way. The lessons reveal her belief that students need to learn the foreign language English by repeating English words and sentences after the teacher and by noting, memorizing, and reproducing difficult English words and their meanings in Urdu. The students have to follow reading routines and dictation routines that Khulood has formed for them to learn English. Lesson 1 demonstrates how she teaches reading lessons from the prescribed textbook and develops rules and routines for her students. Lesson 2 illustrates a typical dictation lesson, an important part of her teaching, which enables her to teach the spellings of the difficult English words and their meanings in Urdu. These two lessons depict teacher-controlled and transmission approaches to teaching.

In contrast, Lessons 3 and 4 demonstrate a shift from her usual practice. Though in these lessons Khulood maintains ultimate control, the activities of the classroom focus becomes more student-centred. She uses these teaching practices less frequently, because she feels that they take up a lot of teaching time. She bases these methods of teaching on her beliefs that students need to take responsibility for their own learning and that they learn better when they work in pairs. Thus, in Lesson 3 she teaches dialogues by engaging students in pair work using a drilling technique to make students memorize and practice the dialogues in pairs. In Lesson 4 she gives the students responsibility for initiating reading of the dialogues: first as homework, and then in the class. The students help each other read the text, correct pronunciation and improve intonation.

COMPARISON OF FATIMA'S AND KHULOOD'S CLASSROOM PRACTICES

Before discussing Fatima's and Khulood's teaching development, it is crucial to compare their classroom practices. The case studies demonstrate that these two teachers are unique persons, have different life experiences through which they perceive the world and themselves as part of it (Nias 1989). However, there are three ways in which their practices can be compared: (a) common practices: where both the intent and the actual actions are quite similar (e.g. transmission of knowledge through lectures); (b) related practices: where there is some level of similarity but there is a significant difference in one or more areas (e.g. their belief that learning needs to be engaging, captivating, and motivating); (c) distinct practices: where there are no apparent similarities in either intention or actual approach. For example, Fatima was inspired by a one-shot workshop on process writing. This approach committed her to initiate a particular teaching approach. Khulood believed that students should be given responsibility for their own learning, that they need to work with each other and that the teacher should work as a facilitator. She therefore gave students the responsibility for their own learning and made them work with each other in pairs and groups.

THEMES

From Fatima's and Khulood's classroom practices emerged two themes: continuity and change and change and continuity; they provide useful markers to compare and contrast the development of the classroom practices over the years. The first theme, continuity and change, captures the continuities in development of their classroom practices. The second theme, change and continuity, focuses more on the changes that Fatima and Khulood brought about in their classroom practices while teaching on-the-job and thus learning from teaching.

Continuity and Change

Continuity and change in Fatima's and Khulood's learning to teach primarily connect to memories of their personal experiences in the 'Distant Past': when they were students and were learning English. They recount this past from two connected but distinct vantage points. The first focuses on their memories of their observations of their teachers throughout their schooling and university studies. This I call 'Learning to teach from the way I was taught'. The second view of their distant past recalls their memories of being learners of English (both in formal and informal settings), which I call 'Learning to teach the way I learned'. I will explore both of these aspects at some length highlighting how these memories manifested themselves in Fatima and Khulood's classroom practices and how these practices continue their past teachers' methods, albeit with some changes.

Learning to Teach from the Way I Was Taught

Fatima and Khulood each have memories of the way they were taught that influenced their teaching directly and indirectly. These memories constitute an implicit, enduring cultural influence of tradition, where being part of a system subtly establishes norms, habits, and expectations. These memories embody that system to them and influence them when they became teachers in the same system.

The educational system has an indirect but enduring influence on their teaching practices. Both Fatima and Khulood follow traditions, 'the beliefs or customs passed from one generation to another in the conversations and accumulated experiences people share' (Thiessen and Anderson 1999: 6), in the sense that they follow the traditional approach to teaching: exam-oriented, routinized and teacher-centred. They each follow their system's prescribed syllabus and its textbooks for each class.

In addition to these common features of teaching that they remember in general about their own teachers, Fatima and Khulood have distinct memories of the ways particular teachers taught.

These memories also influence the way they teach. This reveals a story of unwitting apprenticeship: Fatima and Khulood did not know that they were 'apprenticing' to be teachers in the days when they were students.

Learning to Teach from the Way I Learned

The conceptions that Fatima and Khulood have about teaching and learning—their notions about themselves as teachers, and their ideas, views, and speculations about students' learning—also connect to their own experiences of learning English. From their experiences of learning English in both formal and informal settings, they had developed assumptions about their students and how they best learn. Fatima remembers learning English through more formal experiences; the informal experiences simply supplemented this formal learning. Fatima found being in an English-medium school helpful, because she had opportunities of listening, reading, and writing in English. Because all courses were in English, she had to think about all her subjects in English. She extended this 'school-based immersion' in English through efforts to read English novels and through listening to her father's and cousin's conversations in English.

Khulood relied more on informal experiences to learn English. Khulood studied in an Urdu-medium school where she was introduced to English as a subject in Class 6. The rest of her subjects were in Urdu. She found English to be 'a very difficult subject' to learn. The alphabet and writing system were very different from Urdu. As a learner, Khulood had to struggle to learn it. In school, she learned English through translation and repetition. On her own initiative, she made deliberate efforts to learn English by attending conversational English courses, reading newspapers and books, watching television and speaking to her siblings at home. From her memories of Class 6 (and the difficulties of learning English at that age), she sees the problems her students have in much the same light. Consequently, she tries to steer or coach them to use some of the same out-of-school strategies she found helpful as a learner.

Change and Continuity

Since their early days of teaching, Fatima and Khulood have continued to use the transmission and teacher-centred practices that they saw their own teachers using and that helped them to learn English as learners. Their practices in their early years of teaching heavily depended on these memories in the distant past, such as Fatima's lecturing and Khulood's structured sequencing. They were ever concerned with the effectiveness of these approaches; subsequently, they included various modifications or supplementary strategies. Thus, much of the development of their practices at the early stages (and continuing to this day) came from a kind of self-conscious attention to daily events and a will to improve what happens in the classroom.

Both Fatima and Khulood have used the transmission approach to teaching most of the time; however, over time they realized that they want their students to have other kinds of learning experiences which are more interactive and more motivating. Gradually, as each teacher found that these interactive types of changes have made classes more interesting both for the students and for themselves, they have set out on a more deliberate path towards change. Breaking away from the pedagogical models of their past has meant allowing space for more critical and reflective learning and teaching to occur. Now, they are quite conscious of the need to enhance and extend the ways in which they can make changes within the constraints of the situations in which they teach. These changes were more deliberate, sustained, and cyclic.

Learning to Teach the Way I Teach

Fatima's and Khulood's stories of development begin with tinkering and making minor changes and modifications in their day-to-day teaching. These changes were mostly instructional or organizational. Though these changes were minor modifications in their everyday teaching life they learned from them to make their existing practices more effective.

Some of this development took place through resolving some of their mundane, daily teaching concerns (Anderson 1997). These were mostly changes or modifications in organizing their teaching-related chores. For example, Fatima has developed a way of organizing, monitoring, and correcting students' written work by using an indexing system.

Other changes took place in Fatima's and Khulood's classroom teaching practices, but usually in the context of making their learned transmission methods more effective. For example, most of the time Fatima taught the texts from the book by reading aloud, but sometimes she made the students read. Though she followed a weekly plan very closely and changed her teaching pace with each section of Class 10 to meet the target of finishing the course in time, she began to make changes by sometimes allowing the students to write answers to the comprehension questions on their own in the class; sometimes she dictated them if the class was lagging behind.

Khulood has developed her own style of modifying and making minor changes to her teaching of reading. She began with the traditional reading of the text to the students. However, she has learned over the years of teaching that students need different instructions at different times. Now, she sometimes reads the text herself; sometimes she asks the students to read it at home. These variations grew out of her perceptions of how much she should allow students to participate and how much she should create opportunities for them to read.

Fatima and Khulood ventured to set out on a more deliberate path of change. Fatima's efforts to engage students in activities such as generating ideas for writing letters and essays, while still keeping them quiet, prompted her to use such activities more often. Khulood's attempts to stimulate students to help each other by having them working in pairs and groups and by giving them responsibility for their learning motivated her to develop group work techniques and use them more often both inside and outside the class.

Learning To Teach the Way I Want to Teach

Seeing the success of some unconventional activities in motivating their students, Fatima and Khulood took up the challenge of introducing such innovations, which became their long-term professional projects. The changes that they brought about were more deliberate, carefully planned, sustained and cyclic. Fatima's project was teaching writing more creatively. Khulood's project was to help students assume more individual and joint responsibility for their own learning.

Fatima's long-term, professional development project of teaching writing began more seriously and deliberately after she attended a workshop on teaching writing. From her experience of teaching, Fatima was aware of the fact that students were not interested in writing, because the examination requirements did not require them to write creatively. But the larger changes that she brought about in teaching writing were initially triggered by the workshop that she attended five years ago in the school. The workshop introduced some new ways of teaching writing. She introduced some alternative ways of teaching. Students enjoyed this alteration in teaching approach and were motivated to write. This feeling of success 'energized' and prompted her to use other such techniques, which encouraged the students' process of writing without causing any problems in the existing classroom setting. Satisfied with the results of this technique, Fatima now uses it in teaching essay writing and story writing.

Khulood's professional development task was to get the students to work with each other in pairs or in groups and take responsibility for their own learning. Her experiences with students in the different schools that she taught altered and developed her use of group work. When she started teaching she used whole-class instruction and expected students to learn what she was teaching. When she asked individual students to read or write, some of them could not read at all. She realized that students' emotional needs are also important in learning a foreign language. They need a secure, warm, sympathetic, and encouraging environment in which to work. She tried to identify the difficulties experienced by

particular students and helped them. She would spend time asking them to read and repeat after her every day. By paying attention to individual students, Khulood was satisfied that she had helped the students who were hesitant and shy to read.

Once they ventured along these paths of developing and changing their classroom practices, Fatima and Khulood became more aware of the complexities inherent in these efforts. They have realized that to make changes in their classroom practices they have to constantly struggle with the forces of tradition within each school. Introducing a new activity requires more time, not only in carrying out the activity itself but also in orienting and training the students to perform the new and different task.

These two themes, continuity and change and change and continuity are interconnected: one imposes limits or boundaries on the other. Thus, a legacy of the past is never quite a replication of the past and a 'departure' from it is never quite a departure or a major break from tradition. Fatima's and Khulood's teaching development exhibits the influence of the past; that is the way their teachers used to teach and the way that they learned as learners. But their development of their classroom practices does not just reproduce the teaching strategies that they remember from their pasts. The situations in which they teach differ from the ones in which they learned English. Thus, they teach in similar ways, but not exactly in the same ways. Continuity still dominates change. It is more common, more frequent, more closely tied to tradition, school norms, cultures. Thus, it often defines or interacts with changes in ways that make the latter seem like minor moves or departures. Nonetheless, they are still changes, but not necessarily 'bold leaps'.

Where continuity is bolstered, reinforced, and legitimized within the traditions and structure of school, changes occur rarely and with difficulty, without much sanction or support. Fatima's and Khulood's innovations are more self-directed projects that have become part of their own (personal) 'continuities'. They changed their practices as self-initiated efforts of their own continuing learning as part of the job of teaching (Little 1981). They had no

external support and no ideas or strategies of teaching 'imported from the outside' (Feiman-Nemser 1983: 167) except the one writing workshop that Fatima had attended.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Two major findings emerged from the study: teacher development is both a biographical and an experiential process.

Teachers' Biographies

The study revealed that teachers' classroom practices are embedded in their biographies. This finding is similar to those of researchers such as Ball and Goodson (1985) and Goodson and Cole (1994), who suggest that teachers' personal biographies and experiences of school and undergraduate courses influence the way they teach. Fatima's and Khulood's formal experiences of learning English in school, college and university, and the ways they were taught English in their two different contexts, influenced the way they themselves teach. In other words, their particular orientation to the subject matter influenced the content and process of their own instruction (Grossman and Gudmundsdottir 1987), which in turn enabled them to conceptualize their particular ways of teaching English.

The teachers base their teaching strategies on their memories of how particular teachers taught them or how they learned English as learners. Fatima and Khulood remembered mostly concrete classroom episodes that they had experienced themselves. Both teachers carried with them the memories of their teachers and their teaching and follow similar practices in their teaching. Such memories of concrete experiences helped both teachers devise similar ways of teaching.

The teachers' beliefs about teaching and the way that they teach not only develop through formal classroom learning but also result from informal ways of learning. The two teachers' development was influenced not only by their formal classroom experiences but also by their informal experiences with families, peers or friends.

The teachers' personal experiences of learning to teach are reshaped by their knowledge of the school contexts in which they work. As such, their knowledge about teaching is personal and yet contextualized, embedded in broader social, cultural, and political dimensions. It is based on their knowledge of the culture in which they are learning to teach (Cuban 1988; Lortie 1975; Nemser, 1983). They develop their personal practical knowledge on the professional knowledge landscape (Clandinin and Connelly 1995) as they move in various professional knowledge contexts (Craig 1998). In their respective contexts, Fatima and Khulood developed practical knowledge (Elbaz 1983) over the years of their experience as observers, learners, and teachers. In other words, they were well aware of their own knowledge, the milieu of teaching, subject matter, curriculum development, and instruction, and the expectations of the stakeholders. Keeping all this in mind, they constructed and adapted their teaching practices. Their personal practical knowledge (Connelly and Clandinin 1988, 1999), that is, the knowledge that exists 'in the teacher's past experience, in the teacher's present mind and body, and in future plans and actions' (1988: 25) enabled both Fatima and Khulood to teach in the way they perceived teaching within the context in which they were teaching. Their teaching was both uniquely personal and yet deeply ingrained in the cultures (Fieman-Nemser and Floden 1986) and traditions (Louden 1989) of teaching. They simultaneously represented both uniqueness and commonalities. They followed the typical teaching pattern of teachers in Pakistan, primarily teacher-centred and didactic. This kind of teaching stresses rote learning and the memorization of content, which is reproduced in examinations set by external agencies (Davies and Zafar 1997; Farooq 1993; Hoodbhoy 1998; Khan 2000). Their teaching also resembled that of the transmission-oriented teachers in non-English speaking countries (Guthrie 1990, Tabulawa 1998).

Learning on-the-job

The second major finding is that teachers develop their classroom practices as they teach. Clandinin, Davies, Hogan and (Kennard

1993) described this process as learning to teach, teaching to learn.

While attempting to cope with the realities of their classrooms and their schools, as most beginning teachers do (Bullough 1989; Bullough, Knowles, and Crow 1991; Hoy and Rees 1977; Lacey 1977; Ryan, 1970), Fatima and Khulood made many minor organizational or procedural changes (e.g. effort to pay attention to minor events that arose as they taught). Some of the minor changes that the two teachers made were everyday adjustments in the existing teaching practices. Instead of lecturing 'at' the students, Fatima sometimes involved them by asking questions. Khulood, in her teaching of reading, sometimes read the text herself; at other times, she asked one of the students to read. She sometimes corrected the students herself and at other times involved the students in checking each other.

Like many teachers, Fatima and Khulood change their classroom practices as a result of constantly changing circumstances and conditions (Thiessen and Anderson 1999). These circumstances and conditions could depend on the context of a particular school, a particular classroom or a particular group of students (e.g. Fatima's changing sections and Khulood's changing schools).

The teachers make changes in their teaching in order to create interesting and educative learning experiences for their students and for themselves. Fatima and Khulood, after some experience of teaching through the transmission approach, both realized they themselves and their students wanted some motivating and interesting ways to learn. Gradually, as they found that the interactive types of changes that they made were interesting both for the students and for themselves, they set out on a more deliberate path towards change. Fatima began to use posters and process writing activities; Khulood used group work and pair work, in which she gave the students responsibilities for their own learning. These changes did not disturb the norms of their respective schools. When they found that the changes that they introduced in their classes yielded better learning opportunities for the students, they started making changes 'more deliberately and

formally over an extended period of time' (Thiessen and Anderson 1999: 6); they considered these changes as their own long-term professional development projects. Some of these changes resulted from some formal professional development activity that gave teachers ideas for trying out teaching techniques with their students.

In some cases, the teachers make these deliberate changes because they hold beliefs about teaching in certain ways. In Khulood's case, one can see persistent and deliberate efforts to teach her students in ways in which they would take responsibility for their own learning. In this way, Khulood developed her practices, deliberately revising and modifying them.

Both teachers managed the challenges of change within the existing traditions of teaching. Fatima and Khulood were both conscious of finishing the syllabus, keeping discipline in the class, moving the classes at a certain pace so as to finish the syllabus, and preparing the students for the examinations. Both teachers were constantly thinking of ways in which they could make changes within the constraints of the situations in which they were teaching.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study has three broad implications for me as a teacher educator, for Pakistan and for the global community.

Implications for me as Teacher Educator

This study and its findings have implications for me as a teacher educator. It has given me insights into ways in which I can make programmatic changes in English courses at AKUIED, as well as providing directions for further research that I intend to conduct.

Programmatic Changes

The knowledge and vicarious experience that I gained through this study led me to join with the growing number of educational

researchers and teacher educators who advocate biography as the core component of programmes of teacher education (e.g. Abbs 1979; Grumet 1992). Fatima's and Khulood's two narratives, located in the two different educational contexts of Pakistan, can be used as case studies to introduce the in-service teachers to the beliefs, complexities, and influences of the situation in which each is teaching and to how all this affects their teaching practices.

Fatima, Khulood and I understood their individual sense of self or identity (Connelly and Clandinin 1999) as and through stories (Bruner 1990; McAdams 1993). Therefore, it is important to engage teachers in telling stories of teaching and practice both for research purposes and for their professional development.

Fatima's and Khulood's stories reveal issues related to their teacher education courses, which were ineffective, boring, and irrelevant to actual teaching situations. This points to the process of trying alternative ways to engage teachers in collaborative and independent teacher development activities, such as action research, teacher research, field-based research.

Research Agenda

This study only begins to construct my understanding of how teachers of English develop their classroom practices in two different contexts in Pakistan.

Pakistan suffers a paucity of research on teachers' lives and teaching practices using narrative inquiry. Given the opportunity, I will take this study forward in several ways. First, it would be valuable to extend the time frame of the research so that one could document a whole series of lessons and track the progress of teaching development. Second, one could usefully extend this research further in general, and in the teaching of English in particular, by facilitating focus groups of teachers from similar contexts; that is, from government Urdu-medium schools and private English-medium schools who could provide perspectives on each other's work or reflect on their own practices. Finally, the learning of English, an interesting dimension, could be further explored in both formal educational and informal social contexts.

Exploring my own development as a teacher of English (Bashiruddin 2002) helped me to understand my teaching and its development. This research study was part of my continuing professional development. I want to continue this research and document my stories of experiences as a teacher educator. This would contribute to a new domain of educational inquiry about teacher educators, especially in the form of self study (Cole, Elijah and Knowles, 1998; Ducharme 1993; Ducharme and Ducharme 1996; Halai 2001; Raina 1995; Russell and Korthagen, 1995).

Implications for Pakistan

Some implications from this study can enlighten and help teacher educators and policy makers in Pakistan to reconceptualize teacher education courses in general and the teaching of English courses in particular in the context of Pakistan.

This study shows that teachers can tell stories of their own experiences and understand their teaching practices. It engaged two teachers in telling stories about the development of their teaching and thus acknowledges and demonstrates that 'teachers think, believe or have opinions...that they know ...And even more important, that they know that they know' (Fenstermacher 1994: 51). The process of inquiry and the process of improvisation and self-discovery itself was significant for the teachers as they found it an educative experience which connected their pasts, presents, and futures. If any changes or reforms in teacher education are to be initiated, the teachers and their teaching practices need to be understood first.

My findings suggest that teachers in English-medium schools and teachers in Urdu-medium schools have different ways of teaching English. English teacher education programs should recognize the differences in the teaching situations and knowledge of English in these two contexts in Pakistan.

Although extensive research points at the ineffectiveness of 'one-shot' workshops (Fullan and Stiegelbauer 1991), the incident of Fatima's learning suggests that such workshops provide an

important message about how teachers can learn new ideas from externally arranged and even 'one-shot' courses. Some researchers have reported quite successful examples of such intervention and collaboration in the Pakistani English language contexts e.g., Hussain 1998; Sheikh 1995.

Fatima's and Khulood's learning-on-the-job processes show that both teachers work through trial and error by following a cycle of mental planning, implementation, and modifications based on what happens in their classrooms. This resembles an action research model, though not as systematic. The general nature of action research follows a form: plan, act, observe, reflect, plan (Kemmis and McTaggart 1988). Such action research can also be built on the existing pattern that teachers are following, by engaging them in either individual or collaborative action research.

Both Fatima and Khulood made efforts to bring about change in their own teaching practices, but had little impact beyond their classrooms. If the schools need to develop and the teachers need to develop as professionals then such 'individual efforts of even most capable, energetic, and dedicated teachers' (Little 1987: 501) do not suffice. Collegiality among teachers can help them develop their teaching practices and learn to teach better.

Implications for Teacher Educators

The results of the study suggest two implications for teacher education in general. Firstly, that teacher education programs should acknowledge the uniqueness of each teacher's own learning and teaching situations, and the influence that it has on that teacher's teaching. Educators need to acknowledge and access the teachers own valuable knowledge in order to build teacher education programs that are best suited to their needs. This approach challenges the traditional 'one-size fits all' teacher education programs, which mainly emphasize the theoretical content of the course. Instead it proposes to understand teachers' knowledge and teaching from the 'inside' rather than from the 'outside in' (Cochran-Smith and Lytle 1993). Hence it emphasizes

the need to listen to teachers' voices to understand their classroom practices (e.g., Bailey and Nunan 1995). Research along these lines seeks to understand teaching in its own terms and in ways in which teachers understand it. The present study represents such new biographical studies in educational research, which have presented accounts of teachers' lives and how their life experiences have influenced their classroom practices (Beattie 2001; Butt and Raymond 1989; Casey 1993; Kelchtermans, 1993; Loudon 1989). This contrasts with earlier research traditions, which presented an outsider's perspective on teaching and sought to identify quantifiable classroom behaviours and their effects on learning outcomes (Chaudron 1988; Dunkin and Biddle 1974).

Second, this study makes another contribution to the field of teacher development by identifying the contextual realities and the status of English in the two different educational systems of Pakistan. This suggests that teacher educators in every country need to consider the contextual realities and the status of English before designing teacher education programs.

CONCLUSION

I hope that this research study which documented Fatima's and Khulood's development in teaching English in the two different school systems of Pakistan, contributes to the ongoing discussions of English teacher learning and development in the world in general. Because it is a pioneering work in the area in the context of Pakistan, I hope my study generates interest and discussion within Pakistan and that teacher educators there take time at the institutional and personal levels to investigate and reflect upon the issues raised here. I also hope that this narrative inquiry opens up new perspectives in understanding the experiences of other teachers in similar situations. Finally, though this research journey ends, it was one committed stage of a continuing professional development journey, which continues. As my mentor and teacher puts it 'It is not that there is a path to follow, we each make our path by walking it' (Edge 2002: 117). I would like to make my path of

continuing professional development by walking it, making some new commitments and reconstructing the ones that I made before.

NOTES

1. I had asked the participants to think of a pseudonym for themselves. The Private School Teacher selected this name, which she has always liked.
2. The Government School Teacher selected this name which means 'Jannat' (Heaven), and explained that it was her niece's name, which she really liked.
3. PACC, Pak-American Cultural Centre, offers conversational English classes. The course material is American and the classes are small (20 students). Students get a lot of practice in speaking English.
4. A pseudonym.

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